U.S. Secretary of State's India Visit

1229. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ:
DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any achievement were made and decisions arrived at during the last two visits of the U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b) U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell visited India on 16-17 October 2001 and on 17-18 January 2002. These visits have strengthened bilateral relations between India and the United States, deepened mutual understanding on the global war against terrorism, enhanced India-U.S. cooperation on Afghanistan and enabled the two sides to discuss Pakistan's role and responsibility with regard to terrorism in India, including in the context of the terrorist attack on the Parliament in December 2001. During Secretary Powell's visit in October 2001, two sides signed a bilateral Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, which is an important step in strengthening law enforcement cooperation between India and the United States.

Bringing of bodies of Indians working abroad

1230. SHRI P. SOUNDARARAJAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the dead bodies of Indian nationals working abroad take unduly long time in reaching India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government would instruct the Indian Missions abroad to take it upon itself the duty of reaching the body to the relatives in India without delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) and (b)

No, Sir. Normally it does not take much time for a dead body of an Indian worker to be transported to India. However, in certain situations like unnatural death, non-cooperation from the foreign sponsor, lack of communication from next-of-kin in India for conveying their willingness to accept the dead body, certain amount of delay becomes unavoidable.

(c) All Indian diplomatic missions abroad have standing instructions to expedite the completion of local formalities by liaising with the authorities of the concerned government so as to ensure timely despatch of dead bodies of workers to India on priority basis.

Secretary level talks between India and Nepal

† 1231. SHRI DEVI PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the issue of talks between the Home Secretaries of India and Nepal in February, 2002;

(b) whether any positive outcome has reached out of the last three rounds talks;

(c) whether any co-operation has been sought from the Nepal Government with regard to controlling the problem of prostitution caused by bringing in a large number of girls and women from Nepal to India in addition to the problems of terrorism and smuggling; and

(d) if not, by when Government would take joint and final decision with Nepal on these issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) Home Secretary-Level-Talks between India and Nepal are part of a bilateral institutional mechanism to jointly address the issues relating to maintenance of peace and security and prevention of criminal activities in the India-Nepal border areas.

The fourth round of Home Secretary-level talks between India and Nepal was held at New Delhi from February 6-7, 2002. The Nepalese Home Secretary also called on the Union Home Minister. The two sides reviewed the progress in the implementation of the decisions

† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.